

Environmental Loans E-Bulletin

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The Environmental Loans E-Bulletin is written by staff in the WI DNR Environmental Loans Section to provide up-to-date information on both the Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) and the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP). These E-Bulletins are sent periodically to alert you to upcoming deadlines, highlight program changes and provide assistance on topics that need clarification.

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Use of American Iron and Steel (aka Buy American)

On January 17, 2014, Congress enacted H.R. 3547, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014”, which includes the funding provisions for both the CWFP and the SDWLP. Included with the appropriation are “Buy American” requirements relating to the use of American iron and steel. These requirements apply to all CWFP and SDWLP projects for which plans and specifications are approved after January 17, 2014.

Congress specified that all of the iron and steel products used in a project must be produced in the United States. Iron and steel products are defined as the following products made primarily of iron or steel: lined or unlined pipes and fittings, manhole covers and other municipal castings, hydrants, tanks, flanges, pipe clamps and restraints, valves, structural steel, reinforced precast concrete, and construction materials.

EPA is putting together additional guidance that we will post on our web site when received. We are hoping that questions such as “what are construction materials?” and “what if plans and specs are amended after 1/17/2014?” will be addressed. EPA is aware of the immediate need for additional information. When we learn more about the details of this provision, we will make every attempt to get that information to you and posted on the web as quickly as possible.

If you received plan approval after January 17th, you will need to comply with this requirement.

WI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL LOANS PROGRAM



SDWLP Proposed Guidance Available for Public Comment

We are proposing a SDWLP policy change relating to the allowance of system-wide and de minimis costs when they are identified in the initial application. Briefly, the proposal is to allow 2% of a project's costs (up to a maximum of \$50,000) for the purpose of system improvements or other de minimis costs not related to the project scope. These items and associated costs would be identified in a separate part of the application and not included when calculating principal forgiveness. In addition, unused contingency funds would no longer be able to be used to cover these costs, but would be limited to the purpose of contingency – unexpected construction costs.

This policy is described in more detail on the DNR web site at:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/news/input/guidance.html>.

The deadline for public comments is 2/14/2014. We will draft a response to comments after that date. It is our intent to implement the final policy with the submittal of the SFY 2015 SDWLP applications. The deadline for submitting those applications is June 30, 2014.

Status Update for Draft Project Priority Lists

The CWFP is expecting to publish the draft SFY 2015 Project Priority List by the end of March, which will include the project scores as completed by the Construction Management Engineers.

For the SDWLP, staff are preparing a **Preliminary** Priority Score List of new PERFs or previously submitted PERFs for which the score is being changed. This list will identify project scores and municipalities will have 30 days to submit additional supporting documentation if they believe the scores are incorrect. The SDWLP intends to publish the complete draft SFY 2015 Project Priority list by the end of March.

SFY 2015 Principal Forgiveness Update

The recently passed appropriations bill retains principal forgiveness at similar levels to what was received for this current year. More information on the budget will be forthcoming.

Upcoming Deadlines!!

June 30th:

Deadline for SFY 2015 SDWLP applications
Deadline for SFY 2015 CWFP Hardship applications

September 30th:

Deadline for SFY 2015 CWFP Principal Forgiveness Applications

Revised application forms will be available in mid-March for the June 30th deadline and posted on the web at:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/documents/EIF/forms/forms.html>

RULE REVISION PROCESS MOVING FORWARD

The rule revision process for chs. NR 162 and 166, Wis. Adm. Code is now at the stage where we are meeting with our external advisory groups.

The most substantive changes identified to date relate to updating our definitions, clarifying and codifying eligibility criteria, and updating DBE language for consistency with federal requirements.

For the CWFP, we are also looking to simplify the scoring system and make it self-scoring, similar to the SDWLP system. We are programming our system to allow both ITAs and PERF scores to be submitted online.

PLEASE NOTE: As we transition CME phones to Cell Phones, their numbers may be changing! Updated numbers will be included in the next E-bulletin!

REMEMBER TO CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL CME PRIOR TO YOUR PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETING!

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